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*Missouri to Begin Receiving More Than \$900 Million to Help Stabilize Schools*

## **Applications and Guidelines Available Today**

(WASHINGTON, DC) - Secretary of Education Arne Duncan today announced that \$44 billion for states and schools is now available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Congressman Russ Carnahan (MO-3), a supporter of the Recovery package, is pleased with the expected benefit funds being released today will have for financially strapped area schools.

This funding will lay the foundation for a generation of education reform and help save hundreds of thousands of teaching jobs at risk of state and local budget cuts. It is expected that when all allocations are made to the state through the State Stabilization Fund (SSF) more than \$900 million will be made available to Missouri.

**"We have a chance to bridge the funding gap affecting most area public schools,"** said Carnahan.

**"These dollars will be well spent on teachers and have an immediate impact for troubled districts. With the right tools and teachers we can increase our students overall success and level the playing field with competing students abroad."**

Today's announcement includes applications and guidelines for \$32.6 billion under the SSF, representing two-thirds of the total dollars in the Fund. This includes \$26.6 billion to save jobs and improve K-12 and higher education and a separate \$6 billion in a Government Services Fund to pay for education, public safety or other government services.

Funds in the first round will be released within two weeks of an application's approval. A second round of stabilization funds will be released later in the year. A third round of funding, the Race to the Top competitive grant program will reward states that have made the most progress on reforms.

The guidelines released today promote comprehensive education reform by receiving commitments from states that they will collect, publish, analyze and act on basic information regarding the quality of classroom teachers, annual student improvements, college readiness, the effectiveness of state standards and assessments, progress on removing charter caps, and interventions in turning around underperforming schools.

"Under the law passed by Congress, the top priority for these dollars is to do right by our schools and our kids. If states play games with these funds, the second round of stabilization funds could be in jeopardy and they could eliminate their state from competitive grant money. This money must be spent in the best interests of children," Duncan said.

The guidelines also require states, including Missouri, to report the number of jobs saved through Recovery Act funding, the amount of state and local tax increases averted, and how funds are used. It further requires that the bulk of the federal dollars be spent on education.

Five billion dollars in competitive grants, the "Race to the Top" fund, will be awarded to states that are most aggressively pursuing reforms. In order to ensure that Recovery Act funds are driving classroom improvements, states competing for Race to the Top funds will be judged on how well they are using the first round of stabilization and Title I funds to advance education reforms.

"Every dollar we spend must advance reforms and improve learning. We are putting real money on the line to challenge every state to push harder and do more for its children," Duncan said.

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